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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

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26 March 1995

Gregory Pope MP,
House of Commons,
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Pope,

Thank you so much for letting us have a copy of Alastair Goodlad's reply dated March 17 to your letter to him earlier in March, regarding the establishment of a permanent UN presence in East Timor.

We accept that there is some merit in Mr Goodlad's contention that a UN presence in East Timor, at least if it was reporting to authorities in Indonesia, might imply UN recognition of Indonesia's annexation of the territory. Nevertheless, we submit that a permanent UN presence in East Timor which would report to the relevant UN agency offices in Geneva or New York or at the UN regional office in Bangkok, rather than to Jakarta, would in fact emphasise that non-recognition, as well as enabling the personnel to work more effectively. We cite as a precedent for this being done the position of the Catholic Church of East Timor which falls under the direct jurisdiction of the Vatican and not that of the Catholic Church of Indonesia.

We would also point to the precedent of the UN's Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH). This Mission, as a purely civilian undertaking, was not initiated by the Security Council but by the General Assembly. MICIVIH reported to the UN and the Organisation of American States, rather than to the Haitian authorities. Their brief was to engage in actual verification of respect for human rights based on the international human rights treaties to which Haiti is a signatory. They also observed political meetings and demonstrations where it was feared human rights violations might occur, as a "dissuasive presence", and made concerns and recommendations known to the Haitian authorities. It appears, according to Amnesty International, that the presence of the Mission did lead to a decrease in human rights violations and greater knowledge among the population about their rights. We see this as a

model which could be applied, with only small alterations, to the present situation in East Timor.

It seems obvious that a lessening of abuses and a reduction of tensions in East Timor would create a more favourable climate for finding a political solution, and working towards a fair, UN-supervised referendum.

Regarding Mr Goodlad's observation that a permanent UN presence would require the cooperation of the Indonesian government, we submit that such cooperation might be obtained through concerted pressure on the Indonesian government by Great Britain (which has repeatedly declared its non-recognition of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor), the international community and the United Nations itself.

We too welcome Indonesia's undertaking to invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit East Timor this year. However, one visit some time "this year" can hardly effectively monitor human rights in East Timor. We feel that it is absolutely crucial that a Human Rights Mission appointed by the UN Secretary General and directly responsible to relevant UN agencies, be sent to East Timor without delay to remain there for three or four months at a minimum, and optimally until the situation is resolved, and report back to the UN. The precedent has already been set, and there is no valid reason why it should not be done in regard to East Timor.

We would be grateful if you could take up these matters with the Minister.

Yours sincerely

Carmel Budiardjo

cc: Ann Clwyd, MP
Chris Mullin, MP
Simon Hughes, MP
Jeremy Corbyn, MP
Llew Smith, MP
Alan Howarth, MP
David Trimble, MP
Sir David Steel, MP
Dale Campbell-Savours, MP
Alice Mahon, MP
Harry Barnes, MP
Terry Davis, MP
David Alton, MP
Anthony Coombs, MP
Robin Cook, MP